

Introduction

According to the Smart Growth Law, the purpose of the Economic Development Element is to promote the stabilization, retention and expansion of the economic base, and quality employment opportunities. To address this requirement, this chapter includes:

- Highlights of the **labor force information** from Chapter 3;
- An assessment of **strengths and weaknesses** with respect to attracting and retaining business and industry;
- An overview of programs that deal with **environmentally contaminated sites** for commercial or industrial uses; and
- A list of organizations (and contact information) providing **economic development programs** at the county, regional, state and federal levels.

In terms of the 14 state comprehensive planning goals, those listed below relate specifically to planning for Evansville's economic development:

- Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.
- Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
- Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
- Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
- Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
- Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels.

Economic Development Vision

In 2025, Evansville's economy is thriving. Commercial and industrial development is supported by quality infrastructure, including the railroad. The renovated historic downtown accommodates a variety of businesses and residential choices. Expanded tourism related to trail development and the City's history has supported development in the downtown. Economic development is in harmony with the City's natural environment and residential areas. Employment opportunities for City residents are available both within the City and in nearby communities accessible via USH 14, STH 213/59 and supporting transit choices.

Labor Force and Economic Base

The Community Profile Chapter provided an analysis of the local and county economy as well as the labor force. Highlights from that chapter include:

- City workers are very mobile. Residents take advantage of Evansville's highway access to commute to nearby employment centers, particularly Madison and elsewhere in Dane County, and to a lesser extent, Janesville and Beloit.
- City residents have a higher level of education attainment than the Rock County average. (Refer to the Education Attainment information provided in the Community Profile Chapter based on the US Census Data.) More City residents have attended college and more City residents have earned advanced degrees as compared to the Rock County figures.
- Evansville has a slightly lower participation rate (71.6%) than most surrounding towns (Union = 77.8%, Magnolia = 75.7%, Porter = 70.2%, and Center = 77.9%). However, Evansville has a higher participation rate than Rock County as a whole (69.3%).
- Average annual wages paid in Rock County were 84% of the average state wages in 2002 (GM wages excluded. If GM wages are included the percentage increases to 101%.) A more detailed breakdown of wage rates is provided in Chapter 3.
- Average annual wages paid in Dane County were 109% of the average state wages in 2002.

Participation Rate describes the relationship between the labor force and population. Participation Rate is the percent of residents, over the age of 16, that are working or looking for work in a community. Retired persons and others not participating in the labor force would not be included in the participation rate.

Table 20 below provides a breakdown of employment as reported by Evansville residents in the 2000 U.S. Census. Please note that this table shows the numbers of Evansville residents employed in particular industry sectors, regardless of the geographic locations of their workplaces. This table does not provide any information about the numbers of people who work in particular sectors in Evansville.

TABLE 20 EVANSVILLE RESIDENT EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY SECTOR, 2000		
Industry Sector	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting & mining	18	0.9%
Construction	172	8.6%
Manufacturing	383	19.1%
Wholesale trade	49	2.4%
Retail trade	264	13.2%
Transportation and warehousing and utilities	76	3.8%
Information	18	0.9%
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	168	8.4%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	197	9.8%
Educational, health and social services	488	24.3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	77	3.8%
Other services (except public administration)	42	2.1%
Public administration	53	2.6%

SOURCE: 2000 U.S. Census

The figures in Table 20 provide little insight about the employment of Evansville residents. Are these percentages higher than average? Are they lower than average? Comparing employment of Evansville residents to the residents of other geographic areas provides some points of reference. Table 21 includes similar data for residents of the U.S., Midwest, Wisconsin, Rock County and Dane County.

TABLE 21 PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS EMPLOYED BY INDUSTRY SECTOR, 2000						
Industry	Evansville	Rock County	Dane County	Wisconsin	Midwest	U.S.
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting & mining	0.9%	1.6%	1.2%	1.5%	1.9%	2.7%
Construction	8.6%	5.8%	5.1%	6.8%	6.1%	5.9%
Manufacturing	19.1%	29.7%	10.7%	14.1%	18.5%	22.2%
Wholesale trade	2.4%	3.4%	2.7%	3.6%	3.5%	3.2%
Retail trade	13.2%	12.1%	11.0%	11.7%	11.7%	11.6%
Transportation and warehousing	3.5%	3.7%	2.5%	4.3%	4.3%	3.7%
Utilities	0.3%	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%
Information	0.9%	2.0%	3.2%	3.1%	2.5%	2.2%
Finance and insurance	8.1%	3.0%	7.4%	5.0%	5.0%	4.9%
Real estate and rental and leasing	0.3%	1.0%	1.8%	1.9%	1.5%	1.2%
Scientific and technical services	6.5%	2.3%	7.3%	5.9%	4.9%	4.0%
Administration and support	3.3%	2.5%	2.2%	3.4%	2.9%	2.5%
Educational services	8.6%	7.8%	13.8%	8.8%	8.6%	8.5%
Health care and social assistance	15.7%	10.8%	12.1%	11.2%	11.5%	11.6%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1.6%	1.1%	1.3%	1.8%	1.5%	1.5%
Accommodation and food services	2.2%	5.7%	5.7%	6.1%	5.8%	5.8%
Other services (except public administration)	2.1%	3.8%	4.5%	4.9%	4.6%	4.1%
Public administration	2.6%	2.7%	6.5%	4.8%	3.9%	3.5%

SOURCE: 2000 U.S. Census Data

Table 21 reveals, for example, that a higher percentage of Evansville residents were employed in construction than residents of Rock County, Wisconsin, the Midwest, and the U.S. Evansville and Rock County had a higher percentage of residents employed in manufacturing than Wisconsin. Evansville had a higher percentage of residents employed in scientific and technical services than Rock County, the Midwest, and the U.S., but percentage of Evansville residents employed in this sector was similar to the percentage of Wisconsin residents employed in this sector. Evansville had a higher percentage of residents employed in health care and social assistance than Rock County, Wisconsin, the Midwest, and the U.S. Finally, Evansville had a higher percentage of residents employed in finance and insurance than Rock County, Wisconsin, the Midwest, and the U.S., but the Blue Cross Blue Shield processing center that was operating in Evansville in 2000 might have produced this higher percentage. This processing center no longer operates in Evansville.

Employers considering locating or expanding in Evansville should find a pool of interested job applicants among the City's residents. 78% of respondents to the Community Survey said local employment choices is a very weak or weak aspect of Evansville, and only 7% said local employment choices is a strong or very strong aspect; the remaining 14% said they were neutral or had no opinion. Of the respondents who said local employment choices is a weak aspect of the City, 32% said they would be interested in working in Evansville if a comparable job were available; only 5% of these respondents said they would not be interested (the rest of these respondents said they are not sure/not interested, already work in Evansville, or are

retired/unemployed). Similarly, of the respondents who said local employment choices is a very weak aspect of Evansville, 44% said they would be interested in working in Evansville if a comparable job were available; only 6% of these respondents said they would not be interested. Also, of the respondents who said they were not sure or had no opinion on whether local employment choices is a strong or weak aspect of the City, 43% said they would be interested in working in Evansville if a comparable job were available; only 6% of these respondents said they would not be interested. Even among the few respondents who said local employment choices is a very strong or strong aspect of Evansville, all of the said they would be interested in working in Evansville if a comparable job were available, already work in Evansville, or are retired/unemployed; none of these respondents said they would not be interested.

These facts and statistics indicate that the City of Evansville has a solid economic foundation from which to expand upon. The regional economic information (e.g. Rock and Dane County data) presented in the table above indicate a variety of businesses exist. More importantly, these two counties have different industry sectors that represent the strongest employers of local residents. Since Evansville is located very near to Dane County, yet within Rock County, it has the potential to capitalize on both markets. This is far more favorable to a situation where employment is dominated by a single industry sector. More business development will be needed in Evansville as the population grows (refer to the Community Profile Chapter for population projections). Accordingly, the *Future Land Use Maps* provide areas for new business growth.

Current Business Inventory and Business Environments

There are essentially four current business environments in the City of Evansville: downtown, the industrial development area, the east side development site, and USH 14. What follows is a profile of each of these business environments.

DOWNTOWN

Downtown Evansville is the historic heart of the community. It extends along Main Street between First Street and Union Street. To restore its vibrancy, streetscaping is needed to enhance the historic character of the area. This will include improvements to the street surface, sidewalks, signage, building facades, lighting, and plantings. This effort should also include the establishment of residential development in and adjacent to the downtown to provide a concentrated local customer base. The City has created a new downtown tax incremental finance (TIF) district to finance these improvements along Main Street and to expand the downtown commercial district to include the properties along the west side of Union Street between N. Madison Street and E. Main Street. Union Street will receive substantial lighting and sidewalk enhancements in conjunction with the state's reconstruction of USH 14 in 2005.

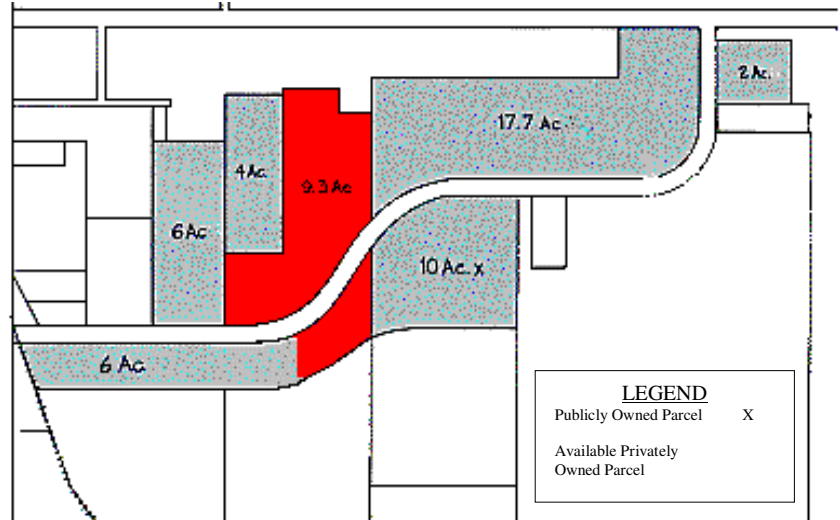
LOCAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY

For a complete list of local business establishments, visit the City of Evansville Internet Web Page at:
www.ci.evansville.wi.gov



EVANSVILLE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AREA

The City of Evansville Industrial Development Area is a 60-acre development located south of Highway 14 on the southeast side of the City. The area offers privately owned sites for industrial development. Industries in this area enjoy direct access to US 14, a 17 minute drive to I-90, rail access, and convenient nearby airport access (Rock County Airport and Dane County Regional Airport).



EAST SIDE DEVELOPMENT SITE

This property is located south of USH 14 between CTH M and Weary Road. This property is differentiated from development along the USH 14 corridor (described below) because the focus of development on this property is industrial rather than commercial. Given that the Industrial Development Area is mostly occupied, the D&D property can accommodate a new large industrial development in the City.

USH 14

Several businesses are located along USH 14 in Evansville. In 2004, these businesses included, at the east edge of the City: Kopecky's Piggly Wiggly, Radio Shack, Ringhand Meats, China Wok, Curves for Women; and at the north edge of the City: Helgesen's Ford-Pontiac, Symdon Chevrolet-Oldsmobile, Big A Corn's Auto Supply, and Evansville's newspaper, *The Review*. The area where these businesses are located may experience development pressure from commercial establishments seeking larger parcels than those currently available downtown.

Attracting and Retaining Business and Industry

The City of Evansville has several positive attributes to offer potential businesses. Specifically, the City has:

- A municipal electric utility that offers substantially lower rates than large, private electric companies
- A great location
- Properties with USH 14 frontage
- Quality local workforce
- Safe community atmosphere
- High quality, progressive school district
- Efforts to showcase alternative energy technologies
- Generally, high household, family and per capita income levels compared to state averages

While the City certainly enjoys its share of advantages, there are several challenges that the City must contend with when seeking to attract new businesses and industry:

- Insufficient available sites for industry.
- Residents of the City of Evansville are very mobile and can easily drive to nearby communities to purchase services and products.
- There is currently a lack of variety of businesses to meet people's everyday needs.
- Poor utilization of downtown parking.
- Local businesses do not have hours that meet the needs of residents who work outside of the community.
- Water utility needs to increase capacity (this issue is being addressed).
- Sewer treatment plant does not have sufficient capacity to accommodate a new "wet" industry.
- Telecommunication limitations.
- Fire district has only paid on-call firefighters.

Desired Business and Industry

The City seeks new business development that enhances the quality of life and capitalizes on the varied and highly qualified work force. Businesses and industries that locate in the City should—

In the Community Survey (Q#19) respondents were asked to rate their preference among several different types of new businesses in the City. The results are provided in the Appendix.

- Be environmentally friendly
- Have outdoor storage (if any) that fits visually into the neighborhood where the business locates
- Comply with the City's zoning code, landscaping ordinance, and sign ordinance.

The City would like to target the following types of development:

PROFESSIONAL, EDUCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL COMPANIES

Many communities across Wisconsin share in this desire. To be successful, the City of Evansville will need to promote its central location and quality of life. For example, the City needs to make potential new businesses aware of the high-quality educational experience available to students enrolled in the Evansville Community School District. According to the state Department of Public Instruction, in 2003, Evansville Middle School's test scores ranked 30th out of 360 middle schools in the state, and Evansville High School's test scores ranked 41st out of 291 high schools in the state. Evansville Community School District's 8th grade test scores ranked 11th out of 185 school districts in the state, and its 10th grade test scores ranked 19th out of 169 school districts in the state. Evansville has a highly skilled work force based on its education attainment levels. Evansville is close to the cultural amenities of Madison, but the cost of living in Evansville is considerably less than in Madison.

ADDITIONAL LOCAL RETAIL CHOICES

To be successful, these ventures will require a unique merchandise selection based on local market demand. Otherwise, potential customers will continue to patronize choices available in nearby communities, including “big box” discount retail stores. Since families and homeowners dominate the local market, potential business may



Retail Development on USH 14

include: bookstores, music stores, furniture stores, craft/quilt shops, hardware stores, etc. To expand the potential customer base, local retail establishments will also need to market to surrounding communities and capitalize on the potential the Internet provides.

SERVICE BUSINESSES

Service businesses (e.g. restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream parlor, grocery stores, and real estate office development) are also desired in the downtown and along USH 14. These businesses, like retail choices, should seek to capitalize on the local family market and high percentage of homeowners. Potential businesses might include food for the home businesses (i.e. bakery, winery, pizzeria) movie theaters and movie rental stores, interior decorators, and the like.

Lodging businesses are also desired to accommodate visitors and special events (e.g. business seminars, weddings, parties, etc.). A motel with a pool and conference rooms located near USH 14 would be a welcome addition to the community. Bed and breakfast establishments are also a desirable business to meet the growing need for local accommodations.

EXPANDED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Industries are needed to provide quality jobs to local residents. Ideally, industries would capitalize on the City’s central location, high percentage of skilled workers, and access to the railroad.

HOME OCCUPATIONS

Home occupations of a professional nature to take advantage of the Internet and other technologies that permit people to work from the privacy of their homes are desired in the City.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Within new residential subdivisions, the potential exists to establish areas for neighborhood commercial development (e.g. daycare centers, convenience stores, dentist offices. etc.) that would contribute to the creation of walkable neighborhoods as discussed in the Transportation Element.

Residential Development as Economic Development

Residential development is growing in the City of Evansville. As such, it continues to provide an increasing share of the area's tax base. Therefore, residential development does provide some economic development gains for the City.

However, to a much greater degree than commercial and industrial development, housing requires extensive services to accommodate resident needs. These services include: schools, parks, sanitary sewer, public safety, roads and associated maintenance (including snowplowing), and other amenities.

A number of community studies have been completed across the country to compare tax revenue generated by different land uses (e.g. commercial, industrial, single family residential, multiple family residential, etc.) to the municipal services they require. Study after study demonstrates that single family residential development often increases public costs by a larger amount than it increases tax revenue for local governments that must provide those services. Commercial and industrial development has a much more positive balance relative to tax dollars paid and dollars expended on services. The premier example of such a study in Wisconsin was completed by the Town of Dunn (Dane County) in 1994. Subsequent studies rely on the Town of Dunn as a model in their efforts.¹

It is important to ensure that local residential tax dollars cover the costs to provide needed services. While the City of Evansville supports additional residential development opportunities, the City wants well-planned new residential development to avoid significantly increasing City and school district operating and service costs for all existing homeowners and taxpayers. Therefore, the City supports new residential development paying a fair and proportionate share of service costs. Current policy requires developers to pay up front the costs of infrastructure.

The City also supports locating residential development, including condominiums and senior housing, within walking distance of the downtown to spur commercial development, that will in turn, support the local tax base.

The City needs more commercial and industrial development to permit the City to reduce its relatively high property tax rate without reducing services. In the meantime, the City needs new residential development to generate sufficient property tax revenue so as not to make the City's financial situation worse while it seeks additional commercial and industrial development. As discussed above, new residential subdivisions are potential sites for new neighborhood-based commercial development.

¹ Additional Information about the Town of Dunn Community Services Study is available on-line at www.town.dunn.wi.us. Also see similar study results for the Towns of Perry and Westport, Wisconsin as well as other communities across the country available from the American Farmland Trust at http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27757/FS_COCS_11-02.pdf.

Tools to Promote Economic Development

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) allows communities to undertake a public project to stimulate beneficial development or redevelopment that would not otherwise occur. It is a mechanism for financing local economic development projects in underdeveloped and blighted areas. Taxes generated by the increased property values pay for land acquisition or needed public works. The City has created a new downtown TIF district to finance these improvements along Main Street and to expand the downtown commercial district to include the properties along the west side of Union Street between N. Madison Street and E. Main Street.

General Procedure for Establishing a TIF

The City defines a TIF district. It may range in size from a single City block to the entire Downtown area.

1. Tax assessments for the district are frozen at their current value.
2. The City, through its tax-increment finance authority, can acquire land and make capital improvements in the district (e.g. streets, lighting, landscaping, etc.) to make it more desirable to developers.
3. When development occurs, the value of the land in the district increases. This increased value is taxed, but for a period of time while the TIF district is in effect, the additional tax revenues go to the TIF.
4. This additional tax revenue is used to pay off the expenses incurred by the City in land acquisition and installation of capital improvements.

More information about establishing a TIF is available in Wis. Stats. Ch. 66.1105(5)(g).

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT MARKET ANALYSIS AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

A market analysis is a comprehensive study that provides details about a business district's current condition, explores changes occurring in the marketplace, verifies consumer wants, needs, and spending habits from that district, discovers what the market will support, and provides the foundation for business development strategy creation.

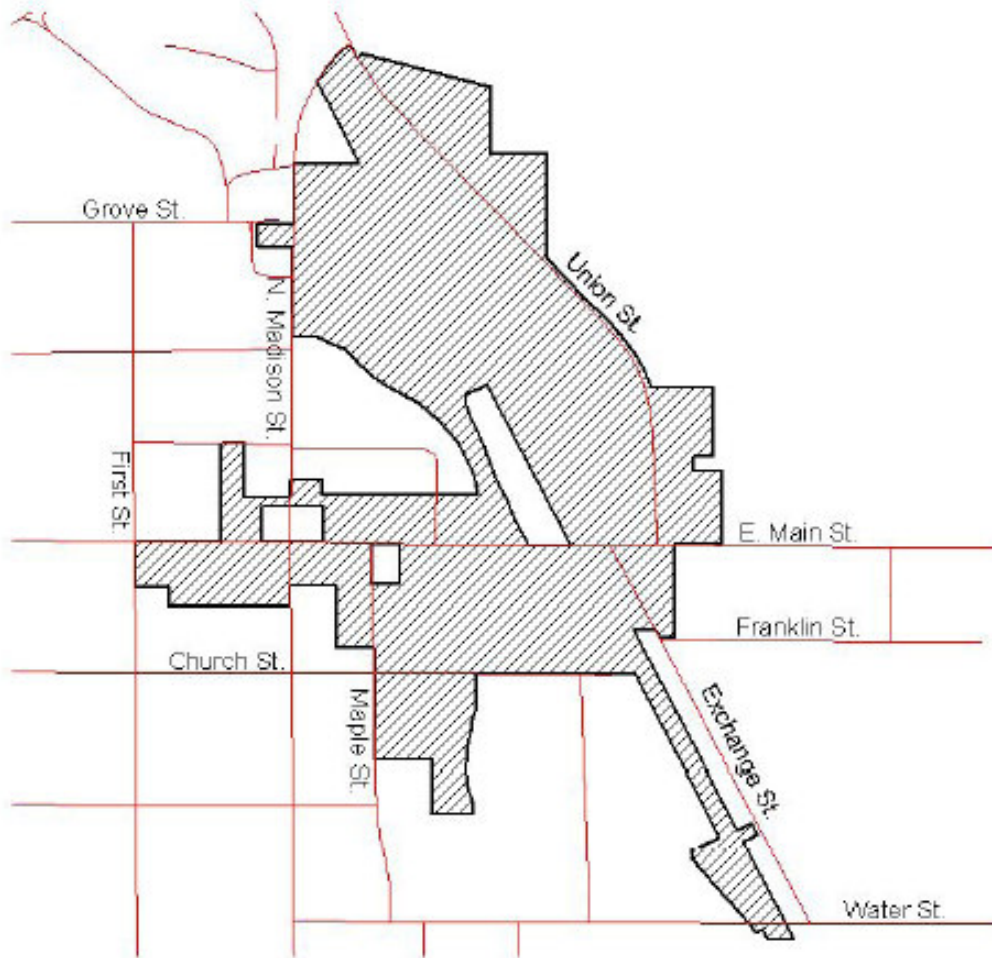
A downtown redevelopment plan is a district plan specifically designed to address the needs of the downtown business district. Such a plan would study the functionality of the older, core commercial areas of Evansville. Results of the study will provide direction for ensuring the continuing function of the downtown as a viable commercial district.

Any recommendations included in a market analysis or redevelopment plan should be implemented in conjunction with this plan to ensure that the economic development opportunities desired are being realized. This will require coordination with utilities and community facilities and transportation improvements identified in previous chapters. The recommendations should be reviewed every five years to measure progress and identify additional objectives.

The Market Analysis answers the following questions:

- What are the business expansion and recruitment opportunities?
- Who are Evansville's customers?
- Who is our competition?
- What niche could we develop for Evansville's Downtown Business District?
- How can we promote the ENTIRE Evansville Business District?
- What markets are underserved?

Evansville's Proposed TIF District



 **Streets**
 **Proposed TIF District**

Original Scale:
 One Inch Equals Five Hundred Feet

0 500 Feet


INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BOND

The Department of Commerce's Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) Program allows all Wisconsin cities, villages and towns to support industrial development through the sale of tax-exempt bonds. The proceeds from the bond sale are loaned to businesses to finance capital investment projects at, primarily, manufacturing facilities. Even though IRBs are municipal bonds, they are not general obligations of the municipality. The company or business that will use the facilities provides the interest and principal payments on the loan. The local government is in partnership with the business, lending its name, but not its credit, to the bond issue.

For more information on the Industrial Revenue Bond Program, contact the Wisconsin Department of Commerce at (608) 267-0762 or get information on the internet at:
www.commerce.state.wi.us

INTERNET MARKETING

Evansville has a web page available at www.ci.evansville.wi.gov. The City uses this site as a marketing tool by providing information about community services, programs, organizations and businesses. The site also includes information about the Industrial Development Area and important contacts like the Economic Development Committee and Chamber of Commerce. This type of information is a valuable resource to marketing professionals seeking development locations.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (CIP)

Through its CIP, the City is able to responsibly plan for future improvements that may generate additional development in Evansville. Additional information about the Capital Improvements Plan is provided in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element.

Program and Organization Assistance

EVANSVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

In 2004, the City created the Evansville Redevelopment Authority to administer the downtown tax incremental district. The Authority already has awarded grants and forgivable loans to redevelop properties and retain businesses in and around downtown Evansville. The Authority welcomes proposals from private investors for public participation in private redevelopment projects within or near the downtown tax incremental district. The Authority is particularly interested in assisting private redevelopment projects that include a substantial condominium or apartment housing component to increase population density in and around downtown Evansville.

EVANSVILLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The City of Evansville Economic Development Committee should be the lead agency in the City to assist business and industry in locating in the area. The City's Economic Development Committee should develop an Economic Development Strategy for the community including industrial retention and expansion programs aimed at retaining and expanding local business and positioning the City to attract new firms. Confidential assistance should be available for businesses and industries seeking information on site locations, financing, utility rates, taxes,

labor availability and wage rates, housing and other resources available to business and industry in the Evansville area.

EVANSVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Chamber of Commerce was formed to bring business, industry, and professional firms and individuals together to improve and promote Evansville.

EVANSVILLE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (ECP)

The Evansville Community Partnership is a betterment group that serves as a catalyst and participates in creating a unique, thriving, and prosperous community in which all community members can be involved. We commit to working together and supporting one another by planning and setting goals, solving problems, resolving conflicts, pursuing opportunities, and promoting our community to citizens and the outside world. We are a not-for-profit, charitable organization made up of local community members. Some of the projects we are excited to work on include creating promotional literature for Evansville, hosting fun family events and beautification projects:

- Chili Cook-off
- Farmer's Market
- Downtown Flower Baskets
- Spring/Fall Downtown Cleanups
- Volunteer Recognition Ceremony
- Evansville Brochure
(Co-published with Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development.)
- Holiday Decorations
- Business Buzz (Business Promotion Book)
- Energy Fair
- Lake Leota Music and Art Fest

LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

A number of local, full-service financial institutions serve the City and are active lenders with experience in development refinancing.

ROCK COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The Rock County Planning and Development Agency is active in promoting economic development and is available to provide information on a variety of state and local financial incentive programs. They also can prepare or help prepare State applications and assist in developing customized financial packages.

In addition to these county organizations and programs, there are many federal, state, and regional organizations that can help the City of Evansville to support economic development opportunities and initiatives in the City.

STATE AGENCIES/PROGRAMS

- Wisconsin Department of Commerce – www.commerce.state.wi.us: This department is the state's primary agency for delivery of integrated services to businesses.
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation – www.dot.state.wi.us: The Office of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Programs encourages firms owned by disadvantaged individuals to participate in all federal and state transportation facility contracts.

- Forward Wisconsin – www.forwardwi.com: Forward Wisconsin markets outside Wisconsin to attract new businesses, jobs, and increase state economic activity.
- Department of Workforce Development – www.dwd.state.wi.us: This department builds and strengthens Wisconsin’s workforce by providing job services, training and employment assistance, and helping employers find necessary workers.
- Wisconsin Small Business Development Centers – www.uwex.edu/sbdc: These centers help ensure the state’s economic health and stability. They offer formative business education, counseling, and technology training.

FEDERAL AGENCIES/PROGRAMS

- Department of Agriculture Rural Development Administration – www.rurdev.usda.gov
- US Small Business Administration – www.sba.gov: provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run and grow their businesses.
- US Department of Commerce – www.doc.gov
- US Department of Transportation – www.dot.gov

Economic Development Opportunities

During the planning process, several economic development opportunities were identified. What follows is a few of the primary opportunities. Supporting goals, objectives and policies are provided at the end of this chapter to help the City to capitalize on these opportunities.

IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CITY OF EVANSVILLE AND LOCAL BUSINESSES

This concept was raised during the workshops held on January 15, 2004. The idea is that with stronger working relationships and open communication, local businesses will better understand local regulations, programs, and plans. Accordingly, it is hoped that improved communication will result in businesses that seek to partner with the City in its growth and development pursuits.

RURAL COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

The Rock County Economic Development Committee is one of the primary parties responsible for promoting economic development in Rock County. The committee has been very focused on promoting activities in Janesville and Beloit, with a secondary emphasis placed on other communities in the county. As such, an opportunity exists to establish a rural community partnership to promote economic development opportunities in Rock County – in communities beyond Janesville and Beloit. Such a partnership would bring together representatives of the other cities and villages in Rock County to define and implement a strategy for economic development, including marketing efforts. If possible, it would be ideal if these communities could share in the funding of a economic development specialist dedicated to the participating communities.

TOURISM

The City has the opportunity to market itself to tourists interested in the architecture of the community. (Additional information about the Evansville’s historic resources is provided in the

Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.) Beyond its historic resources, the City offers a series of events that can attract tourists to the area, including:

- Annual Chili Cook-off
- Annual Easter Egg Hunt
- Evansville Memorial Day Parade
- Eastern Star Strawberry Festival
- 4th of July Parade and Festival
- Music and Arts Festival
- Annual Old Fashioned Christmas
- Friends of the Library Annual Ice Cream Social
- Concert series in Lake Leota Park
- City-Wide Garage Sale Event
- Lake Leota Fest

In addition, by creating regional trails, encouraging the marketing by the county of regional scenic drives, and continuing to improve the historic downtown, there is even more potential for tourist activities in the City.

DESIGN STANDARDS ORDINANCE

Evansville's historic downtown is a true community focal point that is important to the residents of the community. To maintain the integrity of this area, Evansville has a design standards ordinance for non-residential property in the B-2 (downtown business) district. In addition to the basic zoning of a property (e.g. permitted uses, setbacks, etc.), the requirements described in the design standards ordinance also apply.

The design standards ordinance does not provide specific standards for signage, lighting, and façade improvements (including building materials, colors, and decorative elements like awnings). Rather, the ordinance includes provisions for building setback, height, mass, “horizontal rhythms” and “vertical rhythms” (which generally require that new development be modeled after existing development in the immediate vicinity and conform to the general design theme of the downtown area). The ordinance states that the Plan Commission will determine if new structures, building additions, building alterations, and restoration or rehabilitation correspond to the general design theme of the downtown. To be more effective, the ordinance could provide illustrations to clarify important design considerations. Likewise, specific information related to signage, lighting, building materials, and landscaping standards should be included to more clearly define what is acceptable and avoid potential inconsistency in Plan Commission interpretation overtime.

Any changes to the design standards ordinance must be developed with local business owners and interest groups (e.g. Economic Development Committee and Chamber of Commerce). Updating this ordinance needs to be a near-term priority in order to get updates in place prior to the planned revitalization of this district in 2007.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Updates and improvements to the downtown have been scheduled by the City in 2005 and 2007. City projects include reconstruction of the street and sidewalk improvements. For years, the City has attempted to plan for downtown revitalization through its Capital Improvements Plan. However, downtown revitalization has routinely been pushed off as other more immediate priorities have occurred. The City has decided the reconstruction of Main Street's underground utilities, street, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks cannot be delayed any longer. In 2005, in conjunction with WisDOT's project to reconstruct USH 14 within the City (Union St. and E. Main St. east of the intersection with Union St.), the City will replace underground utilities and

reconstruct the street, curbs, gutters, and sidewalk on E. Main St. from the intersection with Union St. to the bridge over Allen Creek. In 2007, the City will do the same work on Main St. from Allen Creek to First St., including replacing the bridge over Allen Creek. The City intends to use tax increment from its new downtown tax incremental district, TID No. 5, to pay much of the debt service on these projects. The extent tax increment will be available to pay debt service on public infrastructure projects depends on how successful the City is in attracting developers who are willing to invest in redevelopment activities that generate more tax increment than they consume.

In 2008, WisDOT will reconstruct part of Madison St. and repave the rest of the street from the intersection with Union Street to the south City limits.

FINANCING FOR DOWNTOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENTS

Evansville has a facade improvement grant program. Unfortunately, the grant funds will soon be completely spent. To continue to provide financial support for downtown business improvements, it is recommended the City and/or local banks provide financing for building improvements in the downtown business district and the replacement of nonconforming business signs. Specifically, the City and local banks should seek to establish a low- or no-interest loan program for facade improvements. The City should also consider financing more substantial improvements for downtown business district with money from a tax increment financing district (refer to the Tools Section for more information).

The Historic Preservation Commission has been making annual contributions to the facade improvement grant program for the explicit purpose of providing matching grants for the replacement of non-conforming business signs with signs that conform to the City's sign ordinance.

The Evansville Redevelopment Authority (ERA) has used tax increment for TID No. 5 to make matching grants for facade improvements to commercial buildings within TID No. 5. The extent to which the ERA will be able to continue to make facade improvement grants with tax increment depends on how successful the City is in attracting developers who are willing to invest in redevelopment activities that generate more tax increment than they consume.

EXPANSION OF THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

The 1996 plan recommended the expansion of the downtown business district to integrate the area between the west side of Union Street and Allen Creek. That recommendation remains in this comprehensive plan.

The Union Street area is an older industrial district, located in a high traffic area that has a number of large buildings and lots. Drainage is a problem due to the location of the parcels between Allen Creek to the west and a wetland to the east. An infrastructure upgrade is required to keep this area an asset to the City. Money from the new downtown tax increment district, administered by the Evansville Redevelopment Authority, could be used to address these drainage and infrastructure issues.

One goal of TID No. 5 is to enlarge the downtown business district to the east to include the area between Union Street and Allen Creek. A considerable amount of vehicle traffic bypasses the

current downtown commercial district on Union Street. If the Union Street area is redeveloped to entice drivers passing through the City to stop and shop or eat, then the City should explore ways to encourage these visitors to stay longer and visit the shops and restaurants in the existing downtown business district. For example, new commercial buildings along Union Street could have dual frontages (i.e. entrances, not just back-door access) to entice visitors to use a proposed walking path connecting these two areas. This path might someday be extended beyond the south edge of the City to connect with the Ice Age Trail and other regional trails described in the Transportation Element.

Environmentally Contaminated Sites

Development efforts can sometimes encounter the challenge of potentially contaminated properties, which are commonly referred to as brownfield sites (see box at right). Brownfield sites vary in size, location, age, and past use. A brownfield site can be a former corner gas station or an empty manufacturing plant. These sites pose a number of problems for communities, including:

- Neighborhood deterioration and community blight
- Potential harm to human health and the environment
- Reduced tax revenue and economic growth
- Attraction for vandalism, open dumping and other illegal activity

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines **brownfield sites** as "With certain legal exclusions and additions, the term 'brownfield site' means real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant."

The City of Evansville has demonstrated its willingness to engage in remediating contaminated sites. The City acquired the site of a former gas station turned pizza parlor at the intersection of Union and E. Main Streets and used a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue to demolish the structure and perform environmental assessment and remediation. The site is now part of Franklin Park.

The term "brownfield" was first used to distinguish developed land from unused suburban and rural land, referred to as "greenfield" sites. The EPA, states, and municipalities believe that choosing brownfield redevelopment over greenfield development yields several benefits for communities and for commerce. Brownfield redevelopment encourages the cleanup of contaminated sites. This is the major goal of most modern environmental regulations. The fewer the number of contaminated sites, the less the cumulative impact to the environment. Another benefit of brownfield redevelopment is that it revitalizes urban areas. (Many brownfields are centrally located in urban areas.) This leads to another perceived benefit -- the minimization of green space development. When brownfields are redeveloped or revitalized in urban areas, less farmland on the urban fringe is developed, maintaining green space and reducing the need for expanding infrastructure and utilities. Finally, when brownfields are redeveloped and new businesses begin operating, these properties return tax base and provide jobs. This is a major financial incentive for municipalities to develop and encourage programs for brownfield redevelopment.

Using one of several databases, interested residents can search for properties in Evansville that have been impacted by environmental contamination (and have been reported). The WDNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Internet web site tracking list is one such database. This database is available at www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/brrts/index.htm. This database tracks identified sites from first reporting through closure or no further action. Records are kept

in perpetuity regardless of whether or not contamination was actually found, the size of the incidence, and whether or not the site has been cleaned.

Governments at all levels have recognized that brownfield redevelopment is an important issue. Numerous programs have been created to encourage brownfield redevelopment including grants, loans, and tax incentives. In the future, Evansville will encourage residents and landowners to pursue the clean up and redevelopment of any contaminated or brownfield site. Likewise, to minimize future environmental impacts, the City will encourage environmentally friendly business development that is properly permitted and regulated to protect the City's natural environment

Relationship to Other Required Plan Elements

Economic development in the City of Evansville directly affects all other elements of this comprehensive plan. Specifically, the Economic Development Element impacts the Land Use, Transportation, Housing, and Utilities and Community Facilities Elements. Therefore, it is important that the elements are consistent and support one another.

LAND USE ELEMENT

New commercial and industrial development must be located in areas that the market will support. Furthermore, new commercial and industrial development should not create a nuisance for neighboring properties. As such, new development should have a minimal environmental impact and be located in areas that have access to needed infrastructure. These concerns were carefully considered during the development of the *Future Land Use Maps*.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

Additional economic development may result in increased truck traffic for deliveries and more local traffic from customers frequenting businesses. The City must work with the county and WisDOT to monitor traffic flows to ensure that new development is appropriately planned and sited to minimize its impact on adjacent roadways. Pedestrian access must also be considered, particularly in terms of access to business destinations.

HOUSING ELEMENT

New economic development will generate jobs and create a potential need for housing in the City to meet the need of local workers. This will include housing choices for workers of various incomes and family sizes.

UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

To support economic development, infrastructure (water, sewer, transportation, electricity, communication) must be available to meet the needs of businesses. The Utilities and Community Facilities Element discusses several planned capacity improvements to better serve the needs of the community, including the economic interests.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

The goals and objectives needed to expand the economic base are provided in Chapter 12. The location for new business development is illustrated on the *Future Land Use Maps*. Policies supporting economic development are provided below.

POLICIES

The City of Evansville will assist in creating new employment opportunities by providing assistance to persons and organizations interested in developing new, or expanding existing, small businesses in the City.

The City of Evansville will continue to utilize the City's Capital Improvement Program to anticipate future budget expenses and support infrastructure investments that are necessary for economic development.

Promote a strong downtown business district while allowing for commercial development at the edge of the City to meet the increased demand for goods and services from the increasing population.

The City will use the Historic District and associated ordinances and design standards to enhance the attractiveness of downtown businesses to customers rather than to undermine the viability of downtown businesses.

Encourage diversification of available goods and services.

Promote the retention and expansion of existing industry.

Provide for industrial traffic movement so that it will avoid minor residential streets.

Provide controlled access from industrial areas to major roads where traffic volume makes this necessary.